United Nations S/2005/131

Security Council

Distr.: General
1 March 2005
English
Original: French

Letter dated 28 February 2005 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

Please find enclosed herewith the text of a letter and its annex dated 8 February 2005 that I received from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

I should be grateful if you would arrange for the text of this letter and its annex to be circulated to the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Kofi A. **Annan**

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Enclosure

Quarterly report to the United Nations on the operations of the International Security Assistance Force

I. Introduction

1. In its resolution 1510 (2003), the Security Council requested the leadership of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) to provide reports on the implementation of its mandate. This is the fifth such report by NATO, and covers the period from 11 August 2004 to 25 January 2005.

2. As at 25 January 2005, ISAF total strength was 8,027 personnel from 26 NATO nations plus 268 personnel from 10 non-NATO nations. Overall troop figures fluctuated during the reporting period, reaching a total of approximately 9,000 at the end of 2004 owing to the presence of election support forces.

3. The successful holding of presidential elections has resulted in the naming of a new Government, with the announcement of the cabinet made on 23 December 2004. The main challenges facing the new Government will be the coordination of policies between ministries, implementing President Karzai's ambitious agenda and preparing for upcoming parliamentary, provincial and district elections. On 30 December 2004, President Karzai issued a notice to recruit deputy ministers, directors of independent directorates and heads of governmental organizations.

4. ISAF continues to expand its mandate to provide a secure environment and assist in the reconstruction of the country. Since August, ISAF has taken over new provincial reconstruction teams at Pol-e-Khumri and Feyzabad. Germany completed bilateral agreements with Denmark and the Czech Republic to provide troops for the Feyzabad provincial reconstruction team and another bilateral agreement with Croatia which will bring a Croat contribution of a long-term civil cooperation component to the German provincial reconstruction team. NATO also has continued its role in running Kabul Afghanistan International Airport (KAIA), with the expected handover from Iceland to Turkey due to take place on 31 January.

5. Transition between Headquarters ISAF VI and Headquarters ISAF VII is to take place in February at a change-of-command ceremony in Kabul.

II. Security situation

Security in the ISAF areas of operation

6. The overall security situation in Kabul and its environs over the reporting period has been relatively calm but unstable, with continual warnings of attacks against ISAF, coalition forces and the Afghan Government. There have been several isolated attacks which caused relatively minor damage and casualties. On 11 October, two rocket attacks occurred in Kabul hitting the Afghan National Army (ANA) garrison adjacent to ISAF Headquarters. On 23 October, a suicide bomber detonated three grenades as three ISAF vehicles from KAIA passed by. As a result two ISAF personnel sustained minor injuries and one was more seriously injured. On 29 October, two civilians opened fire using small arms against an ISAF patrol.

7. In Area North, there is a continued presence of militant forces in the Konduz and Balkh Provinces and of local commanders who oppose the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process and are involved in illegal activities. In terms of the overall security situation, a number of incidents occurred during the presidential election period.

8. On 29 September, there was a rocket attack on the German provincial reconstruction team in Konduz which injured four ISAF personnel (one of whose injuries were considered serious). On 7 September, there was a demonstration against non-governmental organizations in Feyzabad. Although the evacuation operation did not actually take place, the local provincial reconstruction team was preparing to airlift 25 non-governmental organizations personnel to safety using German helicopters. On 6 October, a bomb exploded in Feyzabad, targeting an ally of President Karzai, Ahmad Zia Massoud. On 26 November, a German patrol comprising two vehicles of the Konduz provincial reconstruction team was the victim of an explosion, which caused slight injuries to three German soldiers and damage to one of the vehicles. On 20 January, a suicide attack was carried out against General Dostum in Sheberghan. General Dostum escaped unharmed although 1 body guard was killed and 21 people were injured. A Taliban spokesman claimed responsibility for the attack and General Dostum requested ISAF and coalition support in investigating the attack.

9. Italy has confirmed its intention to deploy personnel to the provincial reconstruction team in Herat. On 20 January, an advance planning team of 7 personnel was deployed followed by a further 42 personnel in February.

10. ISAF has monitored the hajj and has provided security support in that context. Outbound movements of 26,000 Afghan pilgrims to Saudi Arabia occurred without incident. Key airports of debarkation for mass pilgrim movements were KAIA, Mazar-e-Sharif, Herat and Kandahar.

III. Support for the Afghan Transitional Authority and to the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan

Presidential elections

11. The threat from opposing militant forces who wanted to derail the electoral process failed to materialize. Small-scale attacks did occur, although none resulted in serious consequences. ISAF provided enhanced area security and support through the deployment of an additional 2,000 personnel. Provincial reconstruction teams were also reinforced with additional troops and capabilities. Quick-reaction forces, operational reserve troops and NATO air presence contributed to this enhanced security.

12. During the election period, ISAF participated in the Afghan electoral management structure with planners embedded in the Strategic Security Group, Election Information Group and Electoral Security Operation Centre. ISAF also provided limited support to international observers from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the European Union.

13. Limited logistical support was also provided to the Joint Electoral Management Body (JEMB), which has now transitioned to the Independent Election Commission, set up to prepare for parliamentary elections anticipated in May 2005.

The nine Commission members were appointed by President Karzai in an ethnically balanced proportion. ISAF support for JEMB included handling of incoming election material from Europe at KAIA and providing a number of flights between Kabul and Pakistan and the Islamic Republic of Iran to move ballot papers of Afghanis in refugee camps.

14. Prior to the presidential inauguration ceremony on 7 December, ISAF assisted in demining operations around the presidential palace. Additional ISAF support around this event included closure of KAIA to all civilian traffic and vehicle movement restrictions in Kabul.

Support for security sector reforms

15. The disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process is expected to be completed by June 2005. The latest figures show that a total of 34,284 military personnel have handed over their weapons. The ISAF heavy weapons cantonment initiative, although not strictly speaking a part of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process, has proved successful, as 8,114 items of heavy weaponry have been collected and placed in secure compounds. The last remaining significant area containing heavy weapons is in the Panjshir Valley, where a small ISAF detachment is providing assistance.

16. ISAF is increasing its training and development activities in terms of support for ANA using a mentoring role to develop ANA headquarters. ANA has made significant progress and in terms of recruiting, training and fielding of units, the security sector reform process has exceeded its objectives. Seventeen ANA battalions, or Kandaks, have been reorganized into one corps with three brigades.

17. As mentioned in the previous report (S/2004/785, annex, enclosure), current reforms of the judicial system have been only marginally successful, which suggests that greater coordination and involvement by the international community is required. The ISAF legal office aims to organize, in coordination with the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, legal training sessions for Afghani administrative and judicial personnel.

Civil-military cooperation

18. ISAF civil-military cooperation has begun to shift its focus from quick-reaction projects and short-term assessments to a more long-term vision aimed at meeting the requirements of the Afghan national priority programme and harmonizing the activities of the international community and ISAF.

19. Improving the civil administration remains the first priority. ISAF is helping to identify actual needs, promote the use of respective functional specialists, monitor ongoing projects and act as a mediator for training and funding issues. A dialogue is also maintained with the World Bank and the European Commission to provide support for civil-military cooperation within the Afghan stabilization programme.

20. The United States-led counter-narcotics strategy meeting took place in January 2005 with representatives from ISAF and Joint Force Commander Brunsum in attendance, as well as the Afghan authorities and the international community. The aim is to provide a two- to three-year plan for counter narcotics measures.

Kabul Afghanistan International Airport

21. ISAF is currently running KAIA. The long-term objective is the management and operation of the airport to be transferred to the Afghan authorities. At the meeting of the Clearing House on 19 January, chaired by the NATO international staff, representatives from the international community and the afghan authorities reviewed Steering Committee activities related to KAIA rehabilitation. The Clearing House renewed the commitment of the international community to support the Afghan Government in civil aviation.

IV. Conclusion

22. Factional fighting in the northern region will remain a problem if the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process is not afforded its required structure. Sporadic and isolated attacks against local authorities, Afghan security forces and ISAF are likely to continue.

23. ISAF has provided security support to the Afghan Government and made a significant contribution to the successful holding of presidential elections and the subsequent inauguration of President Karzai. The provincial reconstruction teams proved to be a valuable tool in supporting the United Nations and other international organizations (governmental and non-governmental organizations) during the electoral process. NATO has committed itself to providing similar support for the spring electoral process.

24. ISAF has continued to fulfil its United Nations mandate to support the Afghan Government in setting up a secure and safe environment within its area of operations, in addition to conducting framework security operations, ISAF continues to execute a supporting role in the security sector reform, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and associated heavy weapons cantonment.

25. Coordination between the coalition and governmental and non-governmental agencies continues to improve to provide a synergy of purpose in creating a safe environment suitable for the reconstruction of Afghanistan.